

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 NSCE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 INRE-00 SSO-00 TRSE-00
ACDA-12 EB-08 OMB-01 EURE-00 /087 W
-----017968 261743Z /40

O R 261558Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3031

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSAREUR

USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 9762

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR

SUBJ: NOVEMBER ELECTIONS: THE CAPAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST

REF: ATHENS 9638 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: WITH THE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT LATE

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LAST WEEK (REFTEL), THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN IN
EARNEST. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS DELIVERED HIS FIRST
SPEECH BEFORE AN IMPRESSIVE TURNOUT IN THESSALONIKI AND
STOLE MUCH OF THE SHOW AWAY FROM OPPOSITION LEADERS
GEORGE MAVROS (UNITED DEMOCRATIC CENTER - UDC) AND
ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK) WHO ARE ALSO ON THE CAMPAIGN
STUMP. THE ULTRA RIGHT NATIONAL CAMP PARTY IS OFF TO

A SLOW START AND ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT YET ANNOUNCED ALL OF ITS CANDIDATES, THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN NAMED ARE NOT ESPECIALLY IMPRESSIVE. THE INTER-PARTY ELECTION COMMITTEE IS NOW FUNCTIONING AND WILL CONSIDER AS ONE OF ITS FIRST SUBJECTS TELEVISION COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE OFFICIAL DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT ON OCTOBER 22 PUSHED THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN INTO HIGH GEAR. MOST CANDIDATES HAVE NOW BEEN NAMED, ALTHOUGH THE DEADLINE FOR FILING DOES NOT EXPIRE UNTIL MIDNIGHT ON OCTOBER 30, AND ARE ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS LAUNCHED HIS NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY'S OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN WITH A SPEECH IN THESSALONIKI ON OCTOBER 23 BEFORE AN IMPRESSIVE, ATTENTIVE CROWD. (THE FRIENDLY PRESS ESTIMATED THE CROWD AT SOME 300,000 PEOPLE, BUT THE ROUGH GUESS OF OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN THESSALONIKI WAS 50,000-70,000.) THE PRIME MINISTER BROKE NO NEW GROUND IN HIS ADDRESS, STATING ONCE AGAIN THAT HE HAD CALLED FOR EARLY ELECTIONS BECAUSE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF CYPRUS, RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND ENTRY INTO THE EC WOULD REACH A DECISIVE STAGE DURING 1978. ALLUDING TO THE FAR RIGHT, HE ALSO STRESSED THE ELECTIONS WOULD END THE EXPECTATIONS OF THOSE WHO "PRESERVE THE HOPE THAT THEY MAY AGAIN STRIKE AGAINST DEMOCRACY" AND CLAIMED THAT THROUGH THESE

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ELECTIONS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD SEE THAT GREECE HAS ACQUIRED "A SOUND AND STABLE DEMOCRACY."

3. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS THEN REVIEWED THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST THREE YEARS SINCE THE FALL OF THE JUNTA. ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE, HE REITERATED THAT "GREECE BELONGS TO THE DEMOCRATIC WEST", AND NOTED THAT GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH NATO AND "THE SETTLEMENT OF THE MILITARY FACILITIES WITH THE UNITED STATES" WERE ORGANIC PARTS OF GREECE'S POSITION IN THE WEST. HE SPOKE OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR CYPRUS AND POINTED OUT THAT "DANGEROUS PHASES" IN GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY HAD BEEN HANDLED WITH DETERMINATION AND WISDOM. CARAMANLIS SAID HE WOULD EXAMINE THESE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN GREATER DEPTH IN A FUTURE SPEECH. CRITICIZING THE "HYPOCRISY" OF THE OPPOSITION, CARAMANLIS ESPECIALLY LAMBASTED THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES AND PASOK. HE CONCLUDED THAT ONLY THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY COULD PROVIDE THE STABILITY AND LEADERSHIP WHICH GREECE REQUIRES TO MEET THE CRUCIAL PROBLEMS SHE NOW MUST FACE. CARAMANLIS' SPEECH WAS BROADCAST THE SAME DAY ON NATION-WIDE

TELEVISION AND DURING PRIME TIME.

4. GEORGE MAVROS (UDC) AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK) HAVE CONTINUED TO BE ACTIVE AND ALSO GAVE "IMPORTANT" CAMPAIGN SPEECHES ON OCTOBER 23, THE FORMER IN VOLOS AND THE LATTER IN IOANNINA. IN CONTRAST TO THEIR EARLIER TACTICS, THEY BOTH CONCENTRATED MORE DURING THE PAST WEEK ON ATTACKING THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT THAN ON BICKERING WITH EACH OTHER. HOWEVER, PAPANDREOU'S EARLIER SUGGESTION THAT THE "DEMOCRATIC" OPPOSITION -- MEANING THE NON-RIGHT --

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PARTIES SHOULD COOPERATE AFTER THE ELECTIONS FAILED TO PRODUCE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT, ONLY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR (KKE-EXTERIOR) VOICED APPROVAL. IN THAT CONNECTION, MAVROS POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE SUCH FUNDAMENTAL POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UDC AND PASOK THAT COOPERATION COULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF

PASOK CHANGED ITS POSITION ON SUCH ISSUES AS EC ENTRY.

5. MAVROS, IN HIS VOLOS SPEECH, ESSENTIALLY CHARGED THAT CARAMANLIS HAD ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING DURING HIS THREE
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YEARS IN POWER OTHER THAN TO ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATIONS OF A ONE-PARTY STATE, AN OLD MAVROS THEME. HE REPEATED PAST CRITICISMS OF CARAMANLIS' FOREIGN POLICY SUCH AS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD ABANDONED A SOUND CYPRUS POLICY, I.E., ONE BASED ON THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS; WAS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH TURKEY ON AEGEAN ISSUES ALTHOUGH TURKEY MAINTAINED AN AGGRESSIVE POSTURE TOWARDS GREECE; HAD INITIALLED THE U.S.-GREEK DCA, A "GRAVE ERROR" WHICH WOULD ONLY FACILITATE PASSAGE OF THE U.S.-TURKISH DCA AND THUS PERMIT THE RESUMPTION OF ARMS AID TO TURKEY AT THE EXPENSE OF GREECE AND THE CAUSE OF CYPRUS. MAVROS ALSO REPEATED A LONG LITANY OF ALLEGED DOMESTIC FAILURES, SUCH AS A WEAK ECONOMY, LACK OF SOCIAL SERVICES, ETC., CLAIMING THAT ONLY THE UDC COULD OFFER GREECE A PROGRAM OF LIBERAL DOMESTIC REFORMS.

6. PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU, SPEAKING IN THE AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF IOANNINA AND, EARLIER, IN AGRINION, ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS "FAILURE" IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. HE STRESSED THAT CARAMANLIS HAD DESERTED THE FARMERS WHO WERE DEPRIVED OF AN ADEQUATE RETURN ON THEIR LABOR AND WHO LACKED HOUSING, HEALTH CARE AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES. PAPANDREOU CLAIMED THAT ONLY PASOK COULD PROVIDE A PROGRAM MEETING THE PEOPLE'S SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND OTHER NEEDS.

7. THE FACT THAT CARAMANLIS' SPEECH WAS GIVEN LIVE COVERAGE BY THE GOVERNMENT -OPERATED TELEVISION, WHEREAS THE SPEECHES OF MAVROS AND PAPANDREOU WERE NOT ON THE AIR UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY, LED TO PROTESTS BY THE UDC AND PASOK. THE OTHER CONTENDING PARTIES HAVE ALSO COMPLAINED AT THEIR LACK OF RADIO AND TV
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COVERAGE. THIS ISSUE WILL BE ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE INTER-PARTY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO CONSIDER COMPLAINTS ARISING DURING THE CAMPAIGN. ANOTHER QUESTION, WHETHER MILITARY PERSONNEL SHOULD VOTE AS THEY HAVE IN THE PAST IN THE PRECINCT WHERE THEY ACTUALLY

SERVE OR IN THE PRECINCT OF THEIR RESIDENCE, IS ALREADY
BEING DISCUSSED BY THE COMMITTEE.

8. THE ULTRA CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL CAMP (NC) PARTY,
LED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER STEPHANOS STEPHANOPOULOS,
FINALLY PUBLISHED THE LIST OF ITS CANDIDATES FOR MOST
OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICTS. MORE ARE EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED
LATER. A REVIEW OF THOSE CANDIDATES NAMED TO DATE SHOWS AN
UNDISTINGUISHED GROUP WHICH DOES, HOWEVER, INCLUDE
SOME FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS AND A FEW MINISTERS IN
EARLIER GOVERNMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND FROM SOME RELIABLE
SOURCES THAT HEATED DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE WITHIN NC
LEADERSHIP RANKS OVER ITS CANDIDATES. STRONG
PRESSURES WERE PUT ON STEPHANOPOULOS, WE ARE TOLD, TO
INCLUDE JUNTA SUPPORTERS ON THE LIST. APPARENTLY HE
WAS ABLE TO RESIST THIS, AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT THAT
ONLY A VERY FEW OF THE CANDIDATES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN
DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE JUNTA GOVERNMENTS.
MEANWHILE, A SPLIT IN THE ULTRA CONSERVATIVE RANKS HAS
OCCURRED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OPENLY PRO-JUNTA
PARTY BY A FORMER IOANNIDES MINISTER (COSTAS RALLIS).
MOST JUNTA SYMPATHIZERS ARE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR RALLIS'
NATIONAL UNITY RALLY, RATHER THAN THE NATIONAL CAMP,
WHEREVER IT FIELDS CANDIDATES. IN ANY CASE IT SEEMS THAT
STEPHANOPOULOS AND HIS PARTY STILL HAVE SOME INTERNAL SORTING OUT
TO DO.

9. THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT THESSALONIKI CONTRIBUTED
TO THIS REPORT.
MILLS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR, (CARAMANLIS, CONSTANTINE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8e02a827-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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